

They all have proven themselves to be true patriots. It has been my privilege to have them as advisors on military issues. On behalf of our Armed Forces I thank them for their continued service.

HONORING THE WORK OF CHIEF
VERNON A. LOSH II

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today along with my colleague, Congressman MIKE THOMPSON, to honor Chief Vernon A. Losh II, who is retiring this month as chief/department director of the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Services. He has held the position since June 1999, and also served concurrently for over 5 years as fire chief of Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District.

Chief Losh has had a long and distinguished career in fire and emergency services, starting in 1974 with the South Placer Fire Protection District where he eventually held every rank from volunteer firefighter to full-time battalion chief. He came to Sonoma County in 1995 as deputy chief/fire marshal for the Department of Emergency Services and became chief a few years later with responsibility for all aspects of the department's work. He deftly managed 23 full-time employees, over 350 volunteers, and a budget of \$7.5 million.

With extensive education in emergency management, including being one of the first twelve people certified in the State of California as a fire chief, Chief Losh has shared his expertise for years as a community college fire service instructor and also as chair of the Santa Rosa Community College Fire Tech Advisory Committee. A long list of professional affiliations—from local to international—are a testament to both his spirit of community volunteerism and the high regard with which he is held by his peers. He has been president of the Sonoma County Fire Chiefs Association, Sonoma County Department Heads Association, and the Northern California Firefighters Association, to name a few.

Shortly after the anthrax and 911 terrorist attacks on our country, we met with Vern Losh and other Sonoma County officials. We were particularly impressed by the level of emergency preparedness as well as by plans to continuously upgrade and improve equipment and procedures. These efforts, directed by a coordinated leadership effort, clearly paid off when much of the county was affected by severe flooding a few years ago. The response was swift and organized, mitigating what could have been a serious disaster.

The Losh family is also a source of pride to Vern. His wife Teresa is an accountant at the Sonoma County Office of Education and marathon walker for several charitable causes; his son Allen is a specialist in the Army serving as a combat medic ready to be deployed to Iraq on Thanksgiving Day; his daughter Whitney is a student at San Francisco State in the public health field. Whitney just finished her first marathon for Leukemia Lymphoma Society.

Perhaps since, as his biography states, he "currently serves as the Grand Emperor of the

Cosmic Order of Fire Gods, an honor he has held since birth," Vern Losh won't fully retire. He plans to continue as chair of the Sonoma-Mendocino Red Cross, chair of the Volunteer Fire Fighter Committee of the California State Fire Fighters Association, and as the California representative to the National Volunteer Fire Council. He will also become a volunteer firefighter for the City of Healdsburg. And he will continue his teaching at the California Community College.

Madam Speaker, Sonoma County will miss the skills of Chief Vernon Losh, but we thank him for helping to make our emergency services strong. We know he will appreciate having time for his family and his hobbies—photography, football and all sports, attending Giants and 49er games, and firefighting.

HONORING LINDA RAWLS OF
SONOMA, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today along with my colleague, Congresswoman LYNN WOOLSEY, to honor and acknowledge Linda Rawls, who has been named the 2008 Sonoma Treasure Artist of the Year, or simply the Sonoma Treasure, by the city of Sonoma. Each year the city's Cultural and Fine Arts Commission selects one of the hundreds of artists living and working in the Sonoma Valley to receive this honor. Ms. Rawls was singled out for her decade's long work in costume design.

By one account, she has fitted and costumed the stars and extras of more than 132 productions, including those of the Sonoma City Opera, the Sonoma Ballet Conservatory, school plays at Sonoma Valley High and each of the grade schools, Vintage House Senior Center, churches and Hootchie Doo Productions, a community theatre group. Her talents have led her to create designs for productions in neighboring counties, including 42nd Street Moon productions in San Francisco.

According to Ms. Rawls, "Costumes have to do everything. A show can have no scenery, but with a woman's dress or a man's hat, you can decipher the time and place in an instant." She calls costumes the "elemental scenery of a play, telling more about character and context than anything else on stage."

Ms. Rawls stumbled into her artistic calling 26 years ago when the costume designer for a school opera in which her 8-year-old son was performing unexpectedly quit. She volunteered to step in and has been following her passion ever since.

Her peers have acknowledged Ms. Rawls work by awarding her the Best First Day Costume Award from the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in Buxton, England, in 1996 and the Dean Goodman Choice Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre for Costume Design in 2003.

Madam Speaker, Linda Rawls is a true artist in every sense of the word and it is appropriate that we honor her today as the 2008 Sonoma Treasure Artist of the Year.

HONORING FRANK C. TROTТА

HON. TIMOTHY H. BISHOP

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Mr. BISHOP of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor one of Long Island's finest public servants, Frank C. Trotta, who recently left office after serving for a quarter century as mayor of the village of Bellport—a historic community, which, thanks in no small part to Mayor Trotta's leadership, has successfully preserved its character and identity.

On October 30, I was proud to join the Bellport Chamber of Commerce in honoring Mayor Trotta for his steadfast commitment and countless contributions to the people of Bellport. This tribute was celebrated at the Bellport Country Club, which could not have been a more appropriate location considering that it was losing \$35,000 a year when Mayor Trotta entered office.

Today, the golf course generates more than \$1 million a year in revenue for Long Island's economy which is one of the main reasons that village taxes are among the lowest on Long Island.

During his tenure, Mayor Trotta demonstrated a strong commitment to fiscal responsibility and low taxes while protecting vital government services. His legacy is clear: Today, Bellport is on solid financial footing and has been recognized by CNN and Money Magazine as one of the best places to live on the east coast and is 1 of the 10 "hottest" Zip Codes in New York State.

I have been privileged to know Frank Trotta for nearly 35 years, long before either of us entered public service. We attended graduate classes together in the summer of 1974 at Southampton College and I am proud to say that we have been friends ever since. I watched with great pride as Frank's career blossomed. As someone who was new to public service when I was elected to Congress in 2002, I learned a lot simply by watching and talking to Frank.

Although Frank and I do not belong to the same political party, we share a common philosophy, which is that you always put the needs of the community first. There must always be a place in public service for a man like Frank Trotta who understands that political partisanship has no place in village government and we should all treat one another with courtesy and civility.

For anyone who has ever walked with Frank during Bellport's Fourth of July parade, it is plain to see how much he loves his community and how much that community loves him. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to help honor my friend, Frank Trotta, for his years of service to the village of Bellport and our Nation. On behalf of New York's First Congressional District, I wish him continued success, happiness and good health in his future endeavors as a private citizen and one of Long Island's favorite sons.